

May 21, 2007

Representative Joel Sheltroun
Chairman
Tourism, Outdoor Recreation
And Natural Resources Committee

Dear Representative Sheltroun and Committee Members:

We, the officers of the Detour Passage Underwater Preserve Committee, a member of the Michigan Underwater Preserves Council, are unable to attend the Hearing regarding House Bills 4638, 4639 and 4640 which would create and enable the proposed *Great Lakes State Park*. Through this letter we would like to communicate our opposition to these three bills and the park they seek to establish and enable.

There are several reasons for our opposition, including:

- It creates an unfunded mandate to an already under funded DNR
- The \$15.00 "voluntary fee" will be wholly inadequate to fund such programs as are desperately needed; in fact, such a fee (given the currently low numbers of divers we regularly see every season) would not even fund the necessary infrastructure needed to manage this new State Park
- The DNR can set mandatory fees for any State Park, and as such the "voluntary fee" could become a "mandatory fee" which would result in more funds needed for enforcement.
- Many divers we have been in contact with have said they would not pay a "voluntary fee" and certainly would oppose such a fee becoming "mandatory" in the future.
- All of the committees who represent, monitor and maintain the diving infrastructure within Michigan's eleven existing Underwater Preserves are run by volunteers, who raise their own funds and do much of the work themselves. Our fear is that the passage of these bills will cause the perception that it all is now "run by the State" and therefore why should volunteers expend their resources and energy to maintain such resources for other divers. This, (given a poor return on the annual fees), would add to the budget needed for the infrastructure to complete the tasks already done by the individual Preserve Committees. If the fees coming in do not keep up with the needed budget, that would result in a degradation of services, like vessels not being buoyed, etc...
- If vessels are not buoyed and monitored, that would most certainly cause a degradation of our underwater resources since stable buoys limit damage caused by dragging anchors and grapnel hooks, which can decimate a pre-civil war wooden shipwreck in no time.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

Matt Crews
President
Detour Passage Underwater
Preserve Committee

Ron Bloomfield
Secretary/ Treasurer
Detour Passage Underwater
Preserve Committee